

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 8686

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM YO US
SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV AMNESTY

REF: (A) BELGRADE 8367 (B) BELGRADE 7955

1. GOY HAS TAKEN SEVERAL STEPS TO AVERT ANY SUGGESTION THAT AMNESTY GRANTED DUE TO CSCE OR OUTSIDE PRESSURE, OR THAT IT SIGNED NEW LIBERALISM TOWARD DISSIDENTS. FIRST LOCAL MEDIA BURIED 4-LINE FACTUAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND THERE HAS BEEN NO OTHER PRESS COVERAGE. SECOND, BOSNIAN PARTY PRESIDENT MIKULIC STATED IN ADVANCE THAT AMNESTY WOULD NOT INCLUDE MAJOR OFFENDERS (REF B), THOUGH IN FACT SEVERAL PROMINENT PERSONS ACCUSED OF "SERIOUS" CRIMES WERE RELEASED. THIRD, ON EVE OF AMNESTY ITSELF ARREST OF YUGOSLAVIA'S SECOND MOST PROMINENT CONINFORMIST MILE PEROVIC WAS ANNOUNCED.

2. REGARDLESS OF YUGOSLAV ATTEMPTS TO DOWN-PLAY ITS SIGNIFICANCE, QUESTION REMAINS FOR US WHETHER IT HAS ANY LARGER MEANING. AMNESTIES HAVE BEEN A ROUTINE EVENT IN YUGOSLAV JURISPRUDENCE WITH REPUBLIC DAY THE TRADITIONAL TIME FOR THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT. AN ARTICLE WHICH RAN IN THE POPULAR WEEKLY "NIN" LAST MAY 15 SKETCHED A BRIEF HISTORY OF YUGOSLAV AMNESTIES SINCE 1944 AND STRESSED TWO POINTS: (1) AMNESTY IS AN ACT OF MERCY, AND (2) AMNESTY HAS ALWAYS BEEN GRANTED AT MOMENTS WHEN THE SOCIAL
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DNAGER OF CERTAIN ACTS IS LESSENERED, OR WHEN THE POLITICAL-SOCIAL DONDITIONS IN WHICH A CERTAIN TYPE OF CRIMINAL HAS THREATENED NO LONGER PREVAIL. IN THIS SENSE, AMENSTY IS A CONFIRMATION OF STABILITY AND GIVES A MESSAGE THE GOY IS DOUBTLESS GLAD TO BROADCAST. AS TO NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS INCLUDED, YUGOSLAVS WHO HAVE FOLLOWED THIS OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS CLAIM THAT THIS

YEAR'S CROP IS NOT EXTRAORDINARILY LARGE.
AT SAME TIME CSCE AND OVERALL FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
UNDOUBTEDLY WERE FACTORS. AND WESTERN FOCUS
ON SUCH CASES AS MIHAJLOV AND MIKLAVCIC PROBABLY HELPED
TO INSURE THAT THEIR NAMES WERE ON THE LIST. AS ONE
YUGOSLAV NEWSMAN COMMENTED TO US, THE MANESTY WOULD HAVE HAD NO
IMPACT IN THE WEST NO MATTER HOW MANY OR FEW OTHER NAMES
HAD BEEN INCLUDED IF MIHAJLOV HAD BEEN LEFT OFF.

3. AS FOR MIHAJLOV'S PRESENT STATUS, HIS LAWYER BAROVIC
TOLD US DECEMBER 2 THAT HE CONTINUES TO BE VERY EXCITED
AND OUTSPOKEN IN TALKING TO WESTERN NEWSMEN. HIS MAJOR
CONCERN NOW IS ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS IN
YUGOSLAV PRISONS FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS. MIHAJLOV IS
LIVING WITH BAROVIC AS NEITHER HE NOR HIS WIFE HAS
OWN APARTMENT. LAWYER IS TRYING TO CALM
HIM DOWN FOR FEAR THAT HE WILL GET HIMSELF ALMOST
IMMEDIATELY INTO FURTHER TROUBLE WITH THE AUTHORITIES.
BAROVIC ALSO TELLS US THAT MIHAJLOV HAS NO DESIRE AT
PRESENT TO LEAVE YUGOSLAVIA.
WORTZEL

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